

Notes from the AAC Meeting held on Monday 6 February 2023 @ 9.00 am at the Condong Ag. Office Conference Room.

ATTENDEES:

Kevin Twohill (chair) (KT), Malcolm Warren (MW), Dave Bartlett (DB), Milton Lewis (ML), Peter Castle (PC), Tom Walsh (TW), Dean Murphy (DM), Simon Cristaudo (SC)

AG Services Projects discussion

1YO/2YO Model development.

- The model will be a 1-on-1 extension tool for staff to assist growers with assessing the economic implications of increasing the proportion of 1 YO cane harvested each year.
- Concerns over the increased workload and mill reliability have been considered in the project proposal and will be discussed further, to confirm these resistance factors, as well as ensuring that there are no others that have not been mentioned.
- Data was presented that showed at least two of the current varieties available are suitable for cutting annually.

Trial for varieties suited to wet/waterlogged areas

- The project proposal will be finalised and circulated for comment.
- It was suggested and accepted that if this project was accepted, it would serve as a test case in terms of budget and resources required.

Crop Estimation Survey

- The grower survey is in progress at Broadwater and is being conducted in conjunction with the annual mapping update. The survey has a target completion date of 28 February. It was agreed that to attain this would be difficult as manpower is short.

2022 Season Summary

A summary table of the past season's production was circulated and discussed, see below.

Mill	Age	Hectares	Tonnes	T/ha	CCS	CCS/Ha Harv
CONDONG	1	2680.9	201052	75.0	12.4	9.3
	2	1140.4	141847	124.4	11.8	14.7
	3	11.8	1455	123.9	9.5	11.8
CONDONG Total		3833.1	344355	89.8	12.2	10.9
BROADWATER	1	793.3	60742	76.6	12.8	9.8
	2	3749.1	398556	106.3	12.0	12.7
	3	1.0	121	117.6	12.2	14.3
BROADWATER Total		4543.4	459419	101.1	12.1	12.2
HARWOOD	1	992.0	86936	87.6	11.8	10.3
	2	3282.6	429737	130.9	11.6	15.2
HARWOOD Total		4274.6	516672	120.9	11.7	14.1
Grand Total		12651.0	1320446	104.4	11.9	12.5

Items of note were:

- CCS of 12.1 at Broadwater despite the late finish.
- 1YO Productivity at Harwood was good at 88t/ha, despite the floods. Is there a link between high uptake of clean seed and better yields?
- The low yields reflect the seasonal conditions but not a bad result proving again the resilience sugar cane.
- The next two seasons will continue to reflect the effects of the wet 2022 season.
- Individual variety performance for the past season could be misleading due to the flood and cane consignment accuracy.

Travel & Learn

- A list of possible subjects or topics for the visits was discussed.
- It was agreed that a tour of each Mill area should be planned that was open to all growers from the three rivers.
- The venue and itinerary for each tour will be finalised and circulated.

BWR Vacant Farms

- 700 ha of cane lands in the Broadwater area will be available for Lease/Share-farm from 2023.
- More farms could become vacant as Increasing input costs are taking a lot of the profit out of Share-farming.
- Any growers interested in taking on more land should contact Ag Services.

The Role of the AAC & its Members

- A discussion was held to re-affirm the role of the AAC and the role of the grower members. Key discussion points were:
 - Clear direction and input from the grower members of the AAC is required for the AAC and Ag Services to be effective.
 - AAC members communication with Canegrowers and the rest of Industry is also essential for Ag Services to be effective.
 - The committee agreed that in general there were no real current issues between the growers and Ag Services.
- Other points raised during this discussion were:
 - Ag Services must continue to emphasize the positives of using clean seed, to growers particularly at Broadwater and Condong.
 - BWR ASP Seed cane billet quality was raised as a concern. Concerns must be raised sooner to be able address the problem immediately.